to establish sectoral regulations to ensure competition, protect consumers and encourage investment as well as take action against violation of Rules and Regulations of the Board.

The proposal is under consideration of a Group of Ministers.

(c) Petroleum is a central subject under Schedule VII of Constitution. State Governments may bring before the Board, after it is constituted, any matter which impinges on their interests and falls within the competence of the Board.

ONGC's oil refinery project in Ecuador

1483. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether ONGC has evinced interest in setting up an oil refinery in Ecuador if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Saudi Arabia has shows interest in partnering with IOC in building 5 Million Tonnes strategic crude oil reserves in Visakhapatnam and Mangalore; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard and the likely date by which these proposals would be cleared by Government?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) In a recent meeting between Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC) and the Saudi Aramco, the latter had expressed its interest in joining in India's efforts for the maintenance of Strategic Petroleum Reserves; however, no formal proposal has been received from Saudi Aramco in this regard.

Restructuring of public sector Oil Companies

1484. PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
SHRI ANAND SHARMA:
SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are proposing to explore possibilities of restructuring the public sector oil companies and bring up a greater degree of professionalism to make them competitive;

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether the executives of the oil companies would be able to take quick decisions on the demands and supply problems of all the oil energy; and

(c) the basic changes and modifications proposed to be made in the constitution and functioning of the PSUs, to make up with the advancement made by china in the matter of energy security?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) Government have set up an Advisory Committee on Synergy in Energy on 17.1.2005 with the following terms of reference:

(I) Examining the core competence of the public sector undertakings in the petroleum and natural gas sector of India to assess their competitiveness in the evolving domestic and international scenario;

(II) Analyzing the various options of leveraging their strengths to optimally fulfil their required contribution to the national objectives of:

(i) Energy security;

(ii) Accelerated growth;

(iii) Sustained development; and

(iv) Social objectives of Government policy.

(III) Identifying the most appropriate structure and management system for the oil public sector undertakings to secure these ends.

The Advisory Committee is holding its deliberations. Further necessary action will be taken upon the receipt of the report of the Committee.

Security Deposit of LPG Cylinders under Deepam Scheme

1485. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would reduce the security deposits of LPG cylinder of 14.2 kg. from Rs. 750 to Rs. 350 and from Rs. 350 to Rs. 150 for 5 kg. cylinder with regard to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, so as to increase the number of beneficiaries under the Deepam Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and